

the feature that we find to predominate are excess of jaws and mouth, thick lips pushed out by the projection of the jaws and teeth: a defect which age increases, the teeth becoming more and more porrect till they appear to radiate outwards from the upper jaw."

The Rakshasas are called cannibals. The Oraons do not eat human flesh. But, in out-of-the-way places, the notion still prevails among them that, in seasons of drought, the means of rendering fertility to their fields is the spilling of human blood. There *ondkas*, as they are called, are not easy to catch, because, when a mutilated corpse has been found by the roadside, people who know about it are afraid to report the matter.

§ 4. Oraon, Male and Munda countries before the 2^d Aryan invasion. Flight of the Oraons and Mundas to Hardwar, of the Males to Rajmahal.

For an unknown period of time, which terminated at the second invasion of the Aryans (about 1000 B. C.), the bulk of the Oraon and Male tribes seems to have occupied a large and rather irregular tract of the Gangetic country. It may be best described as lying on both sides of the Ganges, between the Gogra on the north, the Tons on the south-west and the Sone on the east. This conjecture is founded partly on the tradition designating Azimgarh¹ as the most ancient Oraon settlement in India, partly on the Ramayana's assertion that, previous to Rama's time, the "Karusha and Malaja country" lay in the modern Shahabad district.

The Oraon territory, however, as opposed to the Oraon people, appears to have been considerably larger, and to have extended, in a south-easterly direction, up to the mouths of the Mahānadi or the vicinity of Puri. Such at least is the natural inference from a passage in the Mahabharata, where the Karusha country is said to be "on the sea-coast". There, according to the poet, lived "Kirata kings, engaged in cruel deeds, living on fruits and roots and wearing skins" (*Sabha*-p. LII, 8, 9). How these Kiratas inhabited a Karusha territory is hard to guess; perhaps they owed allegiance to the Karushas, or may be they were simply roving tribes living where and how they could. What interests us is that these out-of-the-way shores were part of the Oraon country, though, on account of the jungle tracts intervening, not inhabited by the tribe itself.

Kolarian, and notably Munda, tribes were, at that remote epoch, already settled in Magadhā (modern Bihar). Bihar, says Col. Dalton, has numerous antiquities attributed to the Cheros and Kols; and, from the traditions handed down, it appears that the sovereigns of the country were at one time Cheros, the people being for the most part Kols... The antiquities, forts and ruins in all parts of the district are by the present inhabitants universally attributed to that ancient dynasty and primitive race² (*Ethn. of Bengal*, p. 161).

¹ *Ajamgarh*, in Oraon, means either The-Great-Fort or The-Many-Forts.

² Numerous names of places testify to the stay there of the Kol tribes. V. g. *Colgong*, the "Kol-village".